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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Atsushi HAYAKAWA et al.)
SERIAL NO: 10/074,359) Group Art Unit: 1744
FILED: February 12, 2002) Examiner: Sean E. Conley
TITLE: METHOD OF STERILIZATION FOR CONTAINER, APPARATUS
USING THEREFOR, AND HEAT TREATMENT FOR CONTAINER

AMENDED ABSTRACT

Please replace the abstract with the following new abstract:

A high speed sterilization method for sterilizing a container such as a beverage bottle, and an apparatus for performing the method. The method is performed by first preheating the container. The neck portion of the container may be heated separately and additionally to the preheating of the container. A disinfectant mist is then supplied into the container. The container is then heated. Finally, the container is rinsed.